

3.1 Concurrent planning efforts

Additional planning efforts near both station areas have been conducted by neighborhood organizations and community institutions as well as Metro Transit for related aspects of the LRT development process. These processes will be briefly summarized here as they provide background and initial concepts for the master plan.

The **Franklin Avenue LRT Task Force**, comprised of residents, property owners, organizations and businesses from both the Phillips and Seward neighborhoods, initiated planning efforts in 1999 with the goal of influencing development in the Franklin Avenue LRT station area. The Task Force identified four critical issues for the Franklin Avenue LRT station including the impact of the LRT maintenance facility (shops and yards) on the Franklin Avenue LRT station area and adjacent neighborhoods; providing safe, convenient access through this isolated area for pedestrians and for those using wheelchairs, bikes, buses or cars; maximizing development potential in the station area through proactive public involvement; and providing effective public oversight to the LRT project to ensure a balanced approach to critical infrastructure and development decisions.

The final report of the Task Force, published in March 2000, prioritized the following development goals for the station area:

- 1) Enliven the station area with new development that creates a safe, inviting pedestrian environment 24 hours a day;
- 2) Bridge the gap between the Phillips and Seward neighborhoods;
- 3) Provide convenient integration of other transit modes with LRT;
- 4) Strengthen pedestrian connections from all directions;
- 5) Create/attract new living-wage jobs for local residents;
- 6) Create new mixed-income housing with at least 20 percent of units affordable at 30 percent of the metro median income; and
- 7) Create green connections to Midtown Greenway and nearby parks.

The **Ventura Village** neighborhood residents have also developed a community vision for the area west of Hiawatha including the following elements:

- Developing carriage and alley houses to put “eyes on the street” and create affordable housing and density;

- Creating a “yellow brick road” network of pedestrian/green pathways that connect individual blocks with city parks, amenities and services;
- Redesigning Park and Portland Avenues back to residential streets, rather than commercial thoroughfares;
- Maximizing parking in the public domain to create more public and green space;
- Coordinating planning activities regarding University Village, a planned higher density residential retail development centered around the Franklin LRT station; and
- Revitalizing Franklin Avenue with mixed-use buildings that have housing above commercial uses.

The **University of Minnesota** recently completed a Master Plan which includes goals for further development of the West Bank campus along Riverside Avenue. The north side of Riverside Avenue east of Cedar Avenue is recommended for redevelopment as mixed use include student housing with parking below, increasing the potential residential density of this corridor.

Augsburg College also recently completed a Master Plan confirming 20th Avenue as the western boundary of their campus, intensifying residential development along this western edge, and strengthening the Riverside Avenue edge of the campus.

In addition, the **Metropolitan Council** developed a number of planning documents related to station design and public art during the planning of the Hiawatha Line. A complete list of documents related to LRT planning for these station areas can be found in Appendix A.